

Applying the POUR Principles to Create Accessible Documents & Presentations



Is It Perceivable?

The **Perceivable** principle states that “information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.”

Do alt text descriptions adequately convey the meaning of the images? [Refer to these tips for writing good alt text.](#)

Are images that do not convey meaning marked as decorative? Word, PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat allow you to mark an image as decorative.

If any scanned text and images of text are used, is alt text sufficient?

Are captions provided for audio that is synchronized with imagery?

Are transcripts provided for audio-only content? It’s a best practice to provide transcripts for video content as well.

Are video and audio controlled by the user (i.e., not set to autoplay)? Users should have an easy way to turn off any automatic auditory input or visual movement.

Is sufficient color contrast used? Use a color contrast checker such as [the ones recommended here](#) or [the one from WebAIM](#).

Are legible fonts used that are large enough to read easily?

If color is used to convey information, is the information available in another way?

Is It Operable?

The **Operable** principle states that “user interface components and navigation must be operable.”

Can you navigate through the file using only your keyboard?

Are the buttons and links large enough? Try selecting them with the side of your finger or two knuckles.

Are links descriptive? Make sure the destination of the link is clear in the text of the link or button label.

If any time-based elements are used, are options provided to allow additional time?

Is the file free from any flashing or flickering elements?

Is It Understandable?

The **Understandable** principle states that “information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.”

Are clear instructions provided?

Does the file use plain language? Follow [plain language guidelines](#).

For PDF documents, is the language selected in the file properties?

Are navigation elements predictable and consistent?

Are heading styles used to organize content? In Word, check the Styles Pane to verify use of headings. In PowerPoint, check to ensure that all text is visible in the Outline view. In a PDF, check that the file is tagged appropriately.

For Word documents, are images placed “in line with text”?

Are paragraphs of text left-aligned? It’s okay to center short blocks of text, such as column headers.

Have language barriers been considered? Avoid idioms and colloquial phrases. Provide translations if appropriate for the audience.

Is It Robust?

The **Robust** principles states that “content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.”

Does the file include metadata? Verify the document properties, including the title, subject, author, and keywords.

Are the authoring tools and platforms accessible?

Resources for Learning More

- [Accessibility 101](#)
- [Section 508 Training & Resources](#)
- [Accessibility Resource List](#) by Designers for Learning
- [The AIYY Project](#)
- [Designing for Accessibility and Inclusion](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#)
- [Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need](#)
- [Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist](#)
- [Inclusive Design for a Digital World: Designing with Accessibility in Mind](#)
- [Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century](#)

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